

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

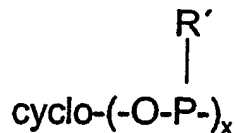
1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a) nitriles of the formula (II) and
b) isonitriles of the formula (III)



by said process comprising reacting

- a) carboxamides (RCO-NH_2), ammonium salts of carboxylic acids (RCOO-NH_4^+)
or carboxylic acids in the presence of ammonia or ammonium salts
($\text{RCOOH} + \text{NH}_3$, $\text{RCOOH} + \text{NH}_4^+$) or
- b) formamides (H-CO-NHR) or mixtures of amines with formic acid,
with cyclic phosphonic anhydrides with elimination of water at a temperature in the range
from -30 to $+120^\circ\text{C}$,
where R may have any substitution and is a linear or branched C_1 - C_8 -alkyl radical, a
 C_3 - C_{10} -cycloalkyl, alkenyl, alkynyl or an aryl or heteroaryl radical.

2. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 1, wherein the cyclic phosphonic anhydride is a
2,4,6-substituted 1,3,5,2,4,6-trioxatriphosphinane 2,4,6-trioxide of the formula (I)



where $x = 3, 4$ or 5 and

R' are each independently open-chain or branched, saturated or unsaturated, straight-chain C₁ to C₁₆-alkyl radicals or cyclic C₃ to C₁₆-alkyl radicals, or aryl or heteroaryl.

3. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 2, wherein R' is a methyl, ethyl, n-propyl, isopropyl, n-butyl, 2-butyl, isobutyl, pentyl, and/or hexyl, ~~in particular an ethyl, propyl, and/or butyl radical.~~
4. (Original) The process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the cyclic phosphonic anhydride is propanephosphonic anhydride.
5. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in ~~at least one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein the cyclic phosphonic anhydride is ~~added to the amide or formamide containing reaction solution~~ either as a melt or dissolved in a solvent.
6. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 5, wherein the cyclic phosphonic anhydride is ~~added~~ in an aprotic solvent[[,]] ~~preferably in a ratio of from 1:1 to 1:2.~~
7. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in ~~at least one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein said process further comprises
 - (i) forming a reaction solution comprising carboxamides; ammonium salts of carboxylic acids; carboxylic acids in the presence of ammonia or ammonium salts; formamide; or mixtures of amines with formic acid;
 - (ii) adding cyclic phosphonic anhydride to the reaction solution; and
 - (iii) heating the reaction solution to reaction temperature,wherein the reaction solution is heated to the reaction temperature after addition of the phosphonic anhydride.
8. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in ~~at least one of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, wherein[[,]] ~~in the case of preparation of nitriles[[,]]~~ are prepared and an

ammonium salt together with a carboxylic acid (R-COOH) is reacted with the phosphonic anhydride in the presence of a base.

9. (Currently Amended) The process as claimed in claim 8, wherein the base used is triethylamine, tripropylamine, benzyldimethylamine, N,N-dimethylaniline or pyridine.
10. (New) The process as claimed in claim 2, wherein R' is an ethyl, propyl, and/or butyl radical.
11. (New) The process as claimed in claim 6, wherein the cyclic phosphonic anhydride and aprotic solvent are in a ratio of from 1:1 to 1:2.